

When It's Time for Some Spring Cleaning in Your Communications

It's still spring. **Time to upgrade things going out of style, time to store the things that don't fit right now and time to retire the items we're not using anymore.** You can do this with your wardrobe if you want, but I'm not interested in your closet. I'm talking about your communications activity.

I have to ask, are you taking inventory of all the content and materials you're generating and measuring the ROI *at least once a year*? If not, you should.

People change. Culture changes. Just because something was a great resource before doesn't mean it is filling the need now. Sacred cows make the best steaks.

TAKE INVENTORY

Take a look at all your activity in every channel. What are you mailing, handing out, posting, rendering, hanging, designing, emailing? With an open mind, honestly ask yourself:

- **Does this still fit?** Have we outgrown this? Is it still us? Does the vocabulary still work?
- **Is this out-of-date?** Is this soooo last season? Is it in tune with what people are looking for?
- **Is this appropriate to wear in public?** Does it help at least 80% of our congregation?
- **Is anyone using this?** Is it solving a problem? Would anyone notice if it was gone?
- **What are the consequences if this went away?** Are there alternative solutions?
- **Is it too much?** Is there any way to simplify this; can we make it easier to find or use?

This only works if you're able to honestly evaluate with an objective lens. Don't plan this exercise if you're in a mood or short on sleep. Bring your best, constructive brain to the table.

AVOID THE TWO EXTREMES

DON'T KEEP IT just because people are used to having it around. Some of the things we keep around have long outlived the problem they were created to solve. If it isn't solving a current problem, it's time for it to go. [Member mailboxes, I'm talking to you.]

DON'T KILL IT for the fast visual relief of decluttering or shortening a task list. If we cut things out without taking the customer journey into account, we risk closing the only channel where guests and members easily find out what's happening from week to week. [Maybe you should try organizing the information in your bulletin better before you get rid of it.]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR, MAKE A PLAN

Spring time may not be the best time to clean your communications closet (though it could be

the best time). Whatever your season of choice may be, mark your calendar now for when you plan to make it happen. And, then. Make it happen.

Consider the team players who need to be part of the conversation. Find a customer advocate who has permission to review what is helpful and what isn't for your audience. **Evaluate all activity at once; with no personal agenda or bias.** Solicit feedback. Spend two power hours (with pizza) to go through the questions. **Make sure everything you're creating (or using) is still solving a real problem**

1. Gather the facts.
2. Get objective input.
3. Review your findings.
4. Decide what needs to go and what needs to take its place.

A good strategy demands that you make a choice to move in one specific direction. It demands that you prioritize what's most important and focus your resources there – trying to have it all will leave you struggling. - [Good Strategy Bad Strategy. The Difference and Why It Matters.](#) by [Richard Rumelt](#)

Pro-tip: If you're not sure about whether you can afford to retire something, **consider a “pilot pause.”** Discontinue it for a season and see what happens. Based on the response you get (or don't get) you can decide what's really needed.

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